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THE “SURE” THING

by Robert A. Monroe

I believe it was Ben Franklin who said there were only two things you could count on in life: death and taxes. However, one in particular seems even more basic: change.

Certainly nothing new about that idea—it’s just that we seem to keep forgetting this reality. Taxes change, rarely lower and usually higher. Physical death changes, too, as we learn more about it. Both still exist, but inevitable differences surface as we understand and/or manipulate them. At least the texture changes.

And so it is with my nearly 32-year involvement with out-of-body (OBE) activity. My perception of the OBE has changed steadily over the years with the addition of experience. That doesn’t change the reality of what took place back in 1958 through my OBEs at that time. They stand very much exactly as reported and remain very accurate.

The change lies in me. It’s been years since I have taken the time, energy, and had the inclination to replicate those early adventures. Today, I don’t know if I could. I’ve moved away from them so far that it would be an extreme effort to do so, and I can’t find a worthwhile reason to try.

Even the intermediate areas of postmortem belief systems don’t hold much attraction for me—they’re too predictable. After spending much time and effort therein, the wisp throughout belief systems of something “beyond” evidently was too tantalizing. Almost without my volition, I took off for the “free” states of being and haven’t been the same since, as they say.

Today, I understand the OBE to be part of a “phasing” process that all of us perform without awareness of what we do. Sleep is the most common example. A crude illustration of phasing: As you read this, the paper is in a position where you can read the words quite clearly. Now rotate the paper slowly on a vertical axis, keeping your head and eyes in the original position. As you do, the words become more and more difficult to read. Finally, you are seeing only the thin edge of the paper. You know the paper is there and you know words are printed on the paper—but you can’t read them. You’re “out of phase” with it.

The OBE is simply another stage of phase relationship to time-space. So are hallucinations, drug highs, meditation, psychoses, visions, ideas, mystical events, and ecstasies, and a long list of other phenomena humankind looks upon with distortion or tries to ignore.

Thus “being human” is a state of consciousness very little of which is under rational control or growth. Moreover, at the present rate of change, it will take several thousand years to evolve beyond the present system—and even that is only a possibility.

With this understanding, it becomes more difficult to take seriously the myriad of minuscule but intense variations of physical survival-driven motivations that infest present-day human thought and action. They are fun to play around in for a while, but not forever.

What is my OB action in 1990? Indescribable. I don’t sleep now in the usual meaning. I haven’t for several years. When I relax physically to a certain point, I phase out of being conscious physically and I’m off somewhere and somewhen to do and be. I don’t even bother attempting to record and report such activity because there seems to be very little counterpart here and far too much of it to translate. Try writing down and reporting second by second every thought and activity you may have in an hour of wakefulness. That same hour of “sleep” to me may be the equivalent of a year or a century, most of it unrelated to human life on earth past and present.

What keeps me here? Loves. Friendships. The beauty of Earth-nature. Curiosity. Ability to help others in one way or another as long as I can give more than I take. But I don’t at all feel superior in the process. It’s more like a monkey who found a hole in his cage and sneaks out to revisit the Forest.

Why return to the cage? As long as there is enough of the above to make it worth the price, I’ll stay around if I reasonably can. And there is indeed a price. It follows the other constant everywhere-everywhen basic law: Cause & Effect, Action-Reaction, Authority-Responsibility . . .

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